

Indian Express March 7, 1990

No meddling in Nepal

Sir,

Prime Minister VP Singh's decision not to meddle in the internal affairs of Nepal (IE, Feb 24) is a welcome change from the policy pursued by the previous Indian governments in this regard. For, though it is not widely known, India's meddling in Nepal's internal affairs is, to an appreciable extent, responsible for the strained relations between the two countries. The first breach in the otherwise cordial relations between India and Nepal appeared when India vehemently protested against King Mahendra's action in dismissing the elected government of the Nepali Congress and imprisonment of the popular leaders in 1960. Indo-Nepalese relations could never be the same thereafter.

While the Indian Government cannot feel happy over the turn of events in Nepal, it has no right to interfere in what is going on there, however reprehensible it may appear to us. Our rival, Socialist China, has never felt any qualms about having to support the monarchy in Nepal if only to serve her national interest. We do not have to really support the King against the people but just have to keep out of their internal political conflict.

The problem with us seems to be that because of the close and intimate relations that have existed between India and Nepal for centuries past, we have developed a tendency to treat Nepal like any of our other princely states and consequently tend to take the cordial relations for granted. Earlier it worked as Nepal then had none other to look to. Now China has opened up new options for her which can, if nothing else, be used by her for bargaining with India.

MAJOR K BRAHMA SINGH (Retd)
JAMMU